

## Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 017268 TOSEC 010181

EXDIS FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US, SY, PINT

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: TALK WITH SAUVAGNARGUES  
ON LEBANON

1. THE SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORT UNDERWAY SINCE FOREIGN  
MINISTER KHADDAM WENT TO BEIRUT JANUARY 21 SEEMS THUS FAR  
TO HAVE SOME PROSPECTS OF SUCCESS. PRESIDENT FRANGIE AND  
THE MOSLEM MODERATES HAVE ACCEPTED THE MEDIATION TERMS,  
WHICH ALSO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF PLO/FATAH AND SAIQA. THE  
SYRIANS AND OTHERS ARE APPLYING MAXIMUM PRESSURE TO THE  
LEFTISTS AND TO CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL ON THE CHRISTIAN  
RIGHT TO ENSURE THAT ALL PARTIES GO ALONG WITH AGREEMENT.  
THE CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCED BY FRANGIE'S OFFICE WAS TO HAVE  
TAKEN EFFECT AT 1800 ZULU JANUARY 22, BUT IT IS TOO EARLY  
TO BE SURE WHETHER IT WILL HOLD.

2. POLITICAL COMPROMISE EMBODIED IN SYRIAN PROPOSAL IS  
SIMILAR TO THE ONE REJECTED BY CHRISTIANS DECEMBER 31, BUT  
HAS ADDED CLARIFICATIONS. THE LEADING POINTS IN WHAT  
MIGHT BE A NINE-POINT UNDERSTANDING REPORTEDLY ARE:

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(1) 50-50 CHRISTIAN MOSLEM DIVISION OF PARLIAMENT (INSTEAD

OF PRESENT 55-44); (2) ELECTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER BY

THE REFORMED PARLIAMENT INSTEAD OF BY PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT; (3) DECONFESSIONALIZATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE EXCEPT FOR HIGH POSTS (WHICH COULD ALLOW THE CHRISTIANS TO RETAIN THE POSITION OF ARMY CHIEF); (4) CREATION OF A SUPREME COUNCIL TO OVERSEE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT; AND (5) ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC WOULD REMAIN A CHRISTIAN (AND PRESUMABLY RETAIN CONSIDERABLE EXECUTIVE POWER).

3. IN ADDITION, THE AGREEMENT PROVIDES THAT THE CEASE-FIRE IS TO BE SUPERVISED BY A LEBANESE-SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN MIXED MILITARY COMMITTEE. THE PALESTINIANS ARE REPORTEDLY SUPPOSED TO OBSERVE THE TERMS OF THE PREVIOUS AGREEMENT COVERING THE STATUS OF THE PALESTINIAN MILITARY FORCES IN LEBANON. THESE PROHIBIT THEM FROM INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANESE AFFAIRS AND ESSENTIALLY RESTRICT PALESTINIAN FORCES TO REFUGEE CAMPS AND CERTAIN AREAS IN SOUTH LEBANON.

4. IN RECENT DAYS THE CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN UNDER HEAVY PALESTINIAN/MUSLIM MILITARY PRESSURE AT VARIOUS POINTS. THE EFFECTIVE AREA OF CHRISTIAN CONTROL IS LIMITED TO ABOUT ONE-FIFTH OF LEBANON, EXTENDING ROUGHLY FROM BEIRUT AND ZAHLE IN THE CENTER TO ZGHORTA IN THE NORTH, ENCOMPASSING THE HEART OF TRADITIONALLY CHRISTIAN MT. LEBANON. THE CEASEFIRE IS AT THIS POINT TOO RECENT TO JUDGE ITS EFFECTIVENESS. EVEN IF ALL PARTIES DO AGREE, IT IS LIKELY TO TAKE SOME TIME TO BRING ALL FIGHTING TO A HALT.

5. YOUR TALKING POINTS:

-- AT THE MOMENT SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORT APPEARS TO HAVE SOME PROSPECTS OF SUCCESS, ALTHOUGH IT OF COURSE FACES GREAT DIFFICULTIES FROM EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES, AND COULD WELL FOUNDER. THE BITTERNESS AND SUSPICION ENGENDERED BY THE CIVIL WAR AMONG THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS IN LEBANON POSE DIFFICULTIES FOR ANY SETTLEMENT EFFORT.

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-- AT THIS DELICATE POINT, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT EVERYONE GIVE ALL POSSIBLE SUPPORT TO THE SYRIAN MEDIATION, AND NOT DO ANYTHING WHICH COULD DETRACT FROM THE POSSIBILITY OF ITS SUCCESS OR ENCOURAGE THE CHRISTIAN EXTREMISTS TO TRY TO WRECK IT. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS ALSO THE FRENCH VIEW.

-- WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE FRENCH WILLINGNESS TO TAKE THE

LEAD IN A NEW INTERNATIONAL EFFORT IF THE SYRIANS SHOULD BE UNSUCCESSFUL AND WE CERTAINLY WANT TO KEEP THIS OPTION

OPEN. FOR NOW, THE SYRIANS APPEAR TO HAVE THROWN MANY OF THEIR ASSETS INTO THEIR EFFORT (INCLUDING THE DANGEROUS USE OF THE PLA TO PRESSURE THE CHRISTIANS) AND HAVE BEEN MAKING CLEAR TO US, TO ARAB GOVERNMENTS, AND TO FRANGIE THAT THEY WOULD NOT AGREE TO THE ENTRY OF ANOTHER MEDIATOR, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT. OUR AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS BELIEVES THE SYRIANS WOULD TRY AGAIN IF THEIR PRESENT EFFORT FAILED, BECAUSE THEIR INTERESTS IN LEBANON ARE SO GREAT.

-- I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS AS TO THE LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF AN ENHANCED SYRIAN POSITION IN LEBANON THROUGH THEIR GUARANTEEING A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THEY HELPED DESIGN. FOR OUR PART, WE BELIEVE THE ISRAELIS WOULD NOT WELCOME THE DEVELOPMENT AND WOULD BE CONCERNED THAT THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON COULD BECOME ENTRENCHED FURTHER. WHILE WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THERE ARE LONGER-TERM PROBLEMS IN A SYRIAN-DESIGNED RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM, WE FRANKLY HAVE COME TO CONCLUSION THAT THIS IS MORE ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE THAN PERMITTING THE LEBANESE SITUATION TO PROCEED ON ITS PRESENT UNCONTROLLED AND RAPIDLY ESCALATING COURSE.

-- THERE HAVE BEEN, IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ALLEGATIONS THAT THE U.S. FAVORS THE PARTITION OF LEBANON. SINCE THESE ALLEGATIONS TEND TO UNDERMINE ANY MEDIATION EFFORT, WE HAVE MADE FIRM PUBLIC STATEMENTS REAFFIRMING OUR GENERAL POSITION AND STRESSING OUR OPPOSITION TO PARTITION, AND ARE PREPARED TO REITERATE THIS IF NECESSARY. OR PERHAPS WE COULD AGREE ON A JOINT STATEMENT TO THE PRESS FOLLOW-  
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ING THIS MEETING ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

BEGIN TEXT:

-- AMONG OTHER TOPICS, FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES AND I DISCUSSED THE LEBANESE SITUATION, FOR THE FIGHTING THERE IS A SUBJECT OF GREAT CONCERN. WE WERE FULLY AGREED ON THE URGENCY OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN LEBANON, AND HOPE THAT CURRENT CEASEFIRE EFFORTS AND STEPS TOWARD POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION NOW UNDERWAY ARE SUCCESSFUL.

-- WE BOTH CONTINUE TO SUPPORT LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, AND UNITY, AND TO OPPOSE OUTSIDE INTERVENTION FROM ANY QUARTER. WE ARE ALSO FIRMLY OPPOSED TO ANY IDEA OF PARTITIONING LEBANON. THAT IS NOT

THE ANSWER TO LEBANON'S PROBLEMS, AND IT WOULD BE A  
HARMFUL MOVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONTEXT. END TEXT.

DRAFTED: NEA/ARN:PKBULLEN

APPROVED: NEA:ALATHERTON, JR. SISCO

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